



Grants Awarded to Strengthen Wisconsin's Specialty Crops

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MADISON – Eighteen Wisconsin projects have been funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant in 2012. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has selected recipients through a competitive review process that will invest in research, market development and economic opportunities for the state's specialty crop producers.

“The Specialty Crop Block Grant provides funding for projects that will have a widespread impact on the state's specialty crop farmers and agribusinesses to make them more competitive in the marketplace,” said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. “These projects will work to improve the specialty crop industry by improving market accessibility, addressing threats from pests and diseases, increasing production efficiency, creating new technologies and advancing food safety methods.”

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided \$883,592 of Specialty Crop Block Grant funding for Wisconsin. Specialty crops include: fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Wisconsin recipients and a short description of their project include:

- **Agricultural Resource Management Division (DATCP):** To facilitate effective communication between the specialty crop grower, pesticide applicator, and stewards of surrounding at risk habitat through the Driftwatch.org Pesticide Sensitive Crop Registry website.
- **Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin:** To continue to test low-risk fungicides for combating two common diseases that can decimate the three top cut flower crops in the state.
- **Dane County University of Wisconsin-Extension:** To help mid-sized fruit and vegetable farmers in Southern Wisconsin access the intermediate market for local produce.
- **FairShare CSA Coalition:** To expand the market for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares in Southern Wisconsin.
- **Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Unit (DATCP):** To continue a cost-share program for producers to increase the affordability of GAP/GHP audits for independent third-party certification.
- **Ginseng Board of Wisconsin:** To finish the work to obtain registrations of alternative pesticides and fungicides to target problematic pests dramatically impacting developing ginseng crops.
- **Gorst Valley Hops LLC:** To establish proper hop processing procedures consistent with Good Manufacturing Practices expectations including food processing facility regulations, quality control, documentation practices and inventory management/product recall logistics.
- **Plant Industry Laboratory (DATCP):** To continue to conduct a detection survey for a new tree root rot disease detected that may have a serious economic impact on the state's fir tree production.
- **University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents:** To establish nutrient content stability of cranberries and to monitor the stability of tissue nutrients during the season in order to ensure growers are basing nutrient management decisions on accurate data.
- **University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents:** To develop and implement a producer-led, research-based sustainability assessment survey, create a Best Management Practice workbook for strawberry growers that provides the science behind the practices in the sustainability survey and communicate advancements in sustainable strawberry production to consumers and buyers.

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- **University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents:** To facilitate a significant increase in Wisconsin grown and minimally processed produce to reach school markets via schools' existing primary distributors.
- **University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents:** To develop timely information about pest management and fruit development as well as provide growers with training workshops to ensure that they have the foundational principles of grape production.
- **Wisconsin Apple Growers Association:** To continue a project to enhance the sustainability of apple production through conservation and use of wild bees.
- **Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association, & Midwest Food Processors Association:** To mitigate disease and insect risk in onion and carrot production through use of forecasting models in pesticide application processes.
- **Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association, & Midwest Food Processors Association:** To investigate best management practices on Wisconsin high tunnel tomato production.
- **Wisconsin Potato Industry Board:** To improve resistance management and environmental quality through applied research of Colorado potato beetle resistance.
- **Wisconsin Potato Industry Board:** To enhance the value of the Wisconsin fresh market potato industry by improving fresh market potato varieties.
- **Wisconsin Sod Producers Association:** To develop IPM techniques for rust diseases currently plaguing the turfgrass industry.

For more information on the Specialty Crop Block Grant, contact Juli Speck, a DATCP Grants Specialist, at 608-224-5134 or juli.speck@wisconsin.gov. You can also connect with DATCP on Twitter at twitter.com/widatcp or Facebook at facebook.com/widatcp.

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